

CONSUMER REGISTER lists proposed & final regulations of Federal agencies. To express your opinion, write. Although comments should reach agencies by the deadline, some agencies will consider comments received late. When in doubt about your comments reaching Washington by the deadline, mail anyway.

## Note: Fireworks

CONSUMER REGISTER learned at its deadline that Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) will announce in the *Federal Register* a delay in its regulations banning the sale & manufacture of firecrackers & many other types of fireworks.

CPSC had scheduled the ban to become effective June 17. However, several American & foreign fireworks manufacturers objected to the regulations & filed a petition before June 17. As a consequence, CPSC must call a public hearing on the issues raised in the petition. The ban cannot become effective until conclusion & evaluation of the hearings.

This delay means the fireworks ban cannot become effective before the Fourth of July.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 16, page 17435. CONSUMER REGISTER: June 15.

## Microwave ovens

July 29 is deadline for comments on Food & Drug Administration's (FDA) proposal to require all microwave ovens to have permanent warning labels about the danger of microwave radiation.

FDA decided permanent labels might be necessary after considering a petition from Consumers Union (CU)—a non-profit organization that tests & rates goods & services—& after evaluating surveys conducted among microwave oven users.

Present regulations require that precautions be included in owner instruction manuals, which are not usually available to microwave oven users in apartments or snack bars.

FDA turned down CU's petition that would have required strict test methods for determining microwave radiation emission under various conditions; & required permanent labels on front exterior of oven (1) warning of dangers of operating an empty oven; (2) instructing users to unplug oven after each use; (3) warning users to keep face away from oven door window when oven is in operation; (4) warning users to keep oven out of reach of children; & (5) warning users of heart pacemaker of potential dangers of microwave radiation.

The proposal would require the following permanent label to be attached or inscribed on the oven in a way that it can be easily seen during normal oven use:

**"PRECAUTIONS FOR SAFE USE TO AVOID POSSIBLE EXPOSURE TO MICROWAVE ENERGY**

**DO NOT Attempt to Operate This Oven Using Microwave Energy with:**

- (a) Object Caught in Door.
- (b) Door That Does Not Close Properly.
- (c) Damaged Door, Hinge, Latch, or Sealing Surface."

More instructions would appear in service manual.

A second permanent label on the oven exterior would be for the use of repairmen. It would read:

**"CAUTION: This Device is to be Serviced Only by Properly Qualified Service Personnel. Consult the Service Manual for Proper Service Procedures to Assure Continued Compliance with the Federal Performance Standard for Microwave Ovens and for Precautions to be Taken to Avoid Possible Exposure to Microwave Radiation."**

More detailed instructions for users & repairmen would be included in the service manual.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 30, page 18797; Sept. 13, 1973, page 25462. CONSUMER REGISTER: Oct. 1, 1973. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Food & Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

## Mobile homes

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has decided that motor vehicle safety does not require a full set of lighting devices on mobile homes.

NHTSA has amended its standard to state that the only required lighting equipment for mobile homes is the following: (1) stop lights, (2) turn signal lamps, (3) tail lamps & (4) rear reflectors. The amendment became effective May 29.

NHTSA said that generally, use of mobile homes on highways is infrequent & confined to day hours. Part of its decision was based on manufacturers' statements that the requirement of additional lighting would add needless cost to "the only low cost housing available to the majority of people today."

Details—*Federal Register*: April 29, page 14946.

## For blind & handicapped

Library of Congress, through its Division for the Blind & Handicapped, lends library materials to the blind & physically handicapped. These materials, which include books, sound reproducers & musical scores, are available upon request on a nationwide basis in libraries designated by the Librarian of Congress.

The library has revised its eligibility requirements for these services, as summarized below:

- Blind persons whose sight is 20/200 in the better eye with corrective glasses, or whose widest sight span is no greater than 20 degrees.
- Persons whose sight—with or without corrective glasses and regardless of sight span—are not able to read standard printed material.
- Persons unable to read or use standard reading material as a result of physical limitations.
- Persons with problems so severe that they are unable to read printed material in a normal manner.

All of the above conditions must be certified by an authority who is acceptable to the library.

Details—*Federal Register*: June 7, page 20203.

For additional information write to Chief, Division for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20542.

## Food stamps

Effective July 1, both Alaska & Hawaii will require that the value of the allotment of food stamps be adjusted semi-annually to reflect changes in the prices of food as calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Both Alaska & Hawaii have 2 of the highest costs of living in the country.

Previous to this change, adjustments were made at the beginning of the fiscal year in July to reflect changes in food prices in the preceding December. With this amendment to the regulation, the first adjustment in food prices was made in January to reflect changes in food prices through August 1973. The next adjustment will be made July 1 to reflect changes in February 1974. This semi-annual pattern will continue.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 29, page 14981; Nov. 1, 1973, page 30118. *CONSUMER REGISTER*: Jan. 1, 1974. Information concerning these food stamp programs is available from local welfare offices in the states.

## Antacids

Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has issued final regulations requiring makers of over-the-counter (OTC) antacid products to meet new standards for safe & effective ingredients as well as for dosages to be permitted.

The order is the first in a series of regulations to assure consumers their non-prescription medications are safe & effective. Regulations for other kinds of non-prescription drugs to be issued later include laxatives, cough & cold remedies, pain relievers & sleep aids.

FDA says that most antacid products will remain on the market, but labeling, ingredients, dosages & promotional claims may be changed.

Some highlights of the regulation follow:

- Labels must carry a section called "Drug Interaction Precautions" that will tell consumers what drugs react unfavorably with the ingredients in the antacid.
- Manufacturers must limit the claims for the antacid's effectiveness to heartburn, sour stomach & acid indigestion. Claims that the antacid will help morning sickness, headaches & other unrelated ailments are not allowed.
- Antacids may be combined with an analgesic (pain reliever) only if the product's label says it is designed to relieve headaches—for example—as well as acid indigestion.
- Labels listing ingredients will be required so that consumers can make meaningful comparisons with other products & avoid products containing ingredients that might be harmful to them.

Because 8,000 antacid products are involved in the regulation, FDA is setting June 1975 as the effective date for completing label & reformulation changes. An additional year may be allowed in some cases.

Details—*Federal Register*: June 4, page 19862; Nov. 12, 1973, page 31260; April 5, 1973, page 8714. *CONSUMER NEWS*: Jan. 15, 1972. *CONSUMER REGISTER*: Nov. 1, 1973.

## Turtles

July 29 is deadline for Food & Drug Administration's (FDA) proposals to either ban the sale of turtles & turtle eggs or to impose requirements on their sale & shipment.

Pet turtles can carry salmonella bacteria. Recent studies show that an estimated 14% of human cases of salmonella infections are caused by pet turtles. Infection, occurs mostly in children, is marked by stomach pain, nausea, fever & diarrhea.

Purpose of the proposals is to reduce the spread of salmonella poisoning, which is continuing in spite of existing certification requirements for shipping disease-free turtles across state lines.

The first proposal—similar to an earlier petition by Consumers Union—would ban all distribution of turtles. FDA is inviting comments on whether this should be the case or if the prohibition should apply only to shipment of small turtles & turtle eggs across state lines.

The second proposal would improve certification methods & impose additional requirements on sale & shipment of turtles. Retail establishments selling turtles would have to put up signs with the following message:

"WARNING—Handling Turtles May Result in Salmonella Infections. Turtles are Known Carriers of Salmonella and Related Infectious Organisms. Before Purchasing Turtles Read Precautions Supplied by the Seller."

Precautions, which would be supplied by the seller in leaflet form, would instruct consumers:

- To wash hands thoroughly after handling turtles.
- To clean turtle bowl with strong cleaning solutions.
- To keep turtles & all utensils associated with turtles away from food.
- To warn children about dangers of touching their faces, foods or other objects after handling turtles.

Both proposals would permit the use of turtles for bona fide scientific, educational or exhibitional purposes.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 28, page 18463; Nov. 18, 1972, page 24670; April 7, 1972, page 7005. *CONSUMER REGISTER*: Dec. 15, 1972; May 15, 1972. Send comments regarding these alternative proposals to Hearing Clerk, Food & Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

## Higher speed protection

Sept. 19 is deadline for comments on National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) proposal to amend its safety standards to require crash protection for occupants of cars traveling 45 to 50 miles per hour. NHTSA believes such protection can be provided at the higher speeds by 1980 because of new technology.

NHTSA has already proposed crash protection—for crashes at speeds up to 30 miles per hour—for occupants using passive restraint systems—such as air bags—in all passenger cars made after September 1976.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 19, pages 10271 & 10273. *CONSUMER REGISTER*: May 15; Feb. 15. Send comments to Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington, DC 20590.

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